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| **Date:** | 23 February 2012 |
| **Subject:** | Mobile learning boosts Tassie apprentices |

Apprenticeship training in the workplace is set to be revolutionised by mobile training opportunities delivered via the National Broadband Network (NBN).

The *NBN Speed on Wheels* project, conducted by the Skills Institute in Tasmania, will see groups of the state’s apprentices training in a media-rich and dynamic e-learning environment, where the classroom comes to the student and the teacher could be anywhere. This mobile training model aims to engage apprentices by creating a learning environment that promotes innovation and capability for self-directed, lifelong learning.

In pursuing this goal, the Skills Institute expects to strengthen its training system in terms of emerging technologies and increase its capacity for NBN readiness, by demonstrating how apprentices’ learning experiences via NBN internet technology engages them more effectively, improving learning outcomes and creatively addressing the workforce development gap.

This new model of training delivery offers remote e-tutoring between individual apprentices and a teacher, as well as live group classes in a workplace delivered from a campus-based teacher through desktop virtual classroom programs or live video streaming.

While formal training is essential for apprentices to have equal work opportunities and be well rounded in their trade knowledge, apprentices are often limited in their training options due to remote locations. The need to be released from the workplace for on-campus training often also requires extensive travelling and periods away from home.

The availability of NBN allows apprentices to improve their learning outcomes with video-streaming, workplace simulations and live synchronous classes that cater for different learning styles. Significantly, this flexibility also extends to the actual qualifications that can be studied remotely, with the trial including horticulture, hospitality, human services and agriculture (dairy).

‍‍The project has been made possible through funding from the National VET E-learning Strategy, whose NBN E-learning Programs provide opportunitiesto create innovative approaches to demonstrate the power of broadband to enhance outcomes for learners, and promote growth in broadband-based training as the NBN rollout proceeds.

“Through this Strategy, we are supporting the development of e-learning programs that maximise the opportunities associated with the rollout of the NBN,” says National NBN Program Manager Fiona Huskinson.

The National VET E-learning Strategy is the responsibility of the Flexible Learning Advisory Group (FLAG), a key policy advisory group on national directions and priorities for information and communication technologies in the VET sector.

“Used strategically, the new technological environment will provide unprecedented access to more accessible training and learning opportunities,” says FLAG Chair Raymond Garrand, Chief Executive of the South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology.

**Core statements for editorial use**

* The National VET E-learning Strategy 2012-2015 (‘the Strategy’) is aimed at strengthening the Australian training sector’s use of new learning technologies, stimulating innovative approaches to increasing participation in training and employment, and improving the skill levels of the Australian workforce
* Investment in the Strategy will stimulate innovative approaches to increasing participation in training and improve the skill levels of the Australian workforce
* To enable the three-year program of action, government funding has been approved to:
* capitalise on the rollout of the National Broadband Network by demonstrating the benefits of the national investment in broadband
* support large-scale workforce development in industry through partnerships and comprehensive e-learning advice
* expand participation and access for individuals through e-learning programs delivering foundation skills and e-literacy
* The Strategy is managed by the Flexible Learning Advisory Group (FLAG), a key policy advisory group on national directions and priorities for information and communication technologies in the VET sector
* The chair of FLAG is Mr Raymond Garrand, Chief Executive of the South Australian Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology.

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